PEOPLE & THINGS

By ATTICUS

THE people of Vienna are not, as a rule, notorious for despatch; but they have certainly lost no time in devising ways of helping those twelve thousand Austrians who lost their homes in the floods which recently poured across the country's most fertile farmlands.

The response to their plight was, of course, both prompt and general—so general, in fact, that the fugitives were surprised to see Russian and American troops working side by side in the submerged landscape. But there has now been devised a special "Relief Schilling"—a sturdy, pictorial little coin which is being added, for instance, to the price of tickets at the Salzburg Festival; and I hear that in the entrance hall of the British Embassy in Vienna there is a set of photographs of last year's floods on the East Coast of England, with the following message beneath: "Do you remember this? The Austrians gave us 1,000,000 schillings. Let us remember them now."

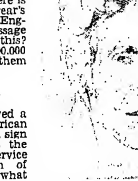
Humour and History

TEA has at least once played a crucial role in Anglo-American relations; and it is no doubt a sign of fair weather ahead that the United States Information Service has put on its exhibition of "American Impressions" at what would, in 1773, have been an enemy strong-point: the London Tea Centre in Lower Regent Street.

There have been no instances, I hear, of tea being hurled from the first-floor windows; but rather of close and friendly interest in what is, in fact, a most diverting and instructive collection of drawings detailing "Over 150 Years of American Life and Humour." Many of the American artists on view are well known. There are, for instance, Washington Allston, the friend of Coleridge, Audubon the naturalist, J. S. Copley, whose son became Lord Chancellor of England, Benjamin West, the second President of the Royal Academy, Whistler and Sargent, and great-named Homer.

A First-Hand Report

THE real point of the exhibition, however, is documentary rather than aesthetic. It is History, not Art, which comes first; for these fugitive drawings, which look like illustrations



to Dreiser or Hart Crane, are intimations of reality. And among the scenes of excitement, pathos, intrigue and natural beauty, there are some in which a human life is glimpsed at its point of greatest tension: notably, for example, in the drawing which I reproduce here—Thomas Sully's portrait of Andrew Jackson, the soldier-President, "taken immediately after the battle of New Orleans."

Haitiana

MR. PETER BROOK is the most inventive of our younger producers, and I have often regretted that we have recently been vouchsafed only the more sober of his creations.

We did not, for instance, see the production of Gounod's "Faust" at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, in which the dear familiar spectacle was transposed into the middle of the nineteenth century; and I can only hope that we shall eventually, at not too long a remove, be allowed to witness the result of Mr. Brook's now-imminent departure for Haiti.

The purpose of this journey is to select an authentic all-Negro cast for the musical play, "The House of Flowers," which Mr. Brook is to direct in New York. The text of this is from the diminutive hand of Mr. Truman Capote; and I hear that it will allow Mr. Brook full scope for what is one of the most arresting aspects of his talent: the power to evoke the forces of darkness.

A Dangerous Day

FOR the Englishman who inclines to praise every climate but his own, there may be a corrective in the news that the summer in France has been so bad that the *Ouverture de la Chasse* has had to be postponed for a week.

September 1 has always been the most dangerous day of the year in the French countryside. The hunting spirit knows no inhibitions. Pellet and buckshot sweep knee-high across the prairies of Normandy; the *furia francese* takes over in the coverts of the Indre-et-Loire; and in the forests of the Ardennes the unwary walker may find himself mistaken for boar-meat. This year's adventures, though deferred till the 8th, are rendered more stirring by the Government's decision that the falcon may once again be used in the chase. These birds will not, it is true, be in any great prominence, since there are only ten accredited falconers in France. But great things may arise from small beginnings; the seventeenth-century fashion may revive, and by 1960 the hazards of beak and talon, and the whirring of dreaded wings, may be an accepted part of French tourism.

Much in a Name

THERE is much in a name: York ham and Dover sole have a prestige that is too often profaned, and I have, therefore, a certain sympathy with Senator Dworshak, the representative of Idaho, in his determination that no un-American fish be served as "Genuine Rocky Mountain Rainbow Trout."

Prejudices, like cannibal trout, lie deep; but, although I have, unterrogated several visiting American rods, I found them admirably impartial in respect both of the fish and of what they quarrel with. American flies, it is true, are not often seen in English waters. The Bi-visible Pink Lady, the Decimated Badger and the stalemate-like President Billard are unknown on the wild Welsh tarns, where the Black Gnat of Heckham-Peckham and Treacle Parkin; but I did find one English specialist who vaunted the American Cardinal fly, with its dazzling red cockade. There is, in fact, a perfect liberality among anglers.

Perhaps Senator Dworshak should be invited to take a turn on the Test?

Exemplary Beasts

THE days of the private patron of the arts are often said to be numbered. Is his place likely to be taken by the more publicised public companies? I am led to think so by a beautifully produced book, "The Queen's Beasts" (Newman Neame. 8s. 6d.) which has been sponsored by Shell.

Many people were intrigued by the ten heraldic figures, sculptured by James Woodford, R.A., which guarded the annexe to Westminster Abbey at the Coronation, but few could name more than two or three and fewer still explain their history or significance. Here they all are, real and imaginary, from the Lion of England and the Falcon of Plantagenet to the Unicorn of Scotland, the Red Dragon of Wales and the Yale of Beaufort. There are not only photographs of them as they appeared at the Abbey, but most engaging interpretations in colour by Edward Bawden and Cecil Keeling.

The text is by H. Stanford London, Norfolk Herald Extraordinary, whose authority in that particular field is beyond question. Mr. London wears his learning lightly and tells most entertainingly all there is to be told about these